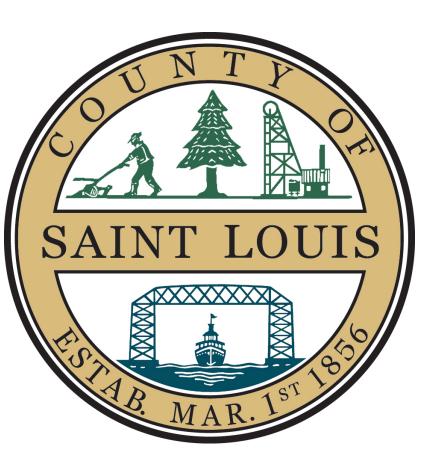
St. Louis County, Minnesota

# 2020 Annual Popular Financial Report



For Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2020



St. Louis County is committed to transparency and openness. This Annual Popular Financial Report (APFR) contains simplified, condensed information from the 2020 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). Unlike the ACFR, this report does not include the necessary financial statements and notes required by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

This APFR is designed to provide the people and businesses of St. Louis County and beyond an overview of the financial strengths and challenges of serving our diverse communities. Readers of this APFR should gain a deeper understanding of the organizational and financial structure of St. Louis County, the County's revenues and expenses, how taxpayer dollars are used, and what the County accomplished in 2020.

# Mission:

The mission of St. Louis County is to promote health and safety, ensure sound infrastructure, embrace our natural resources, and support an environment where communities prosper.

# What's Inside:

Page 2-5 Structure......Commissioners, Organizational Structure, Economy

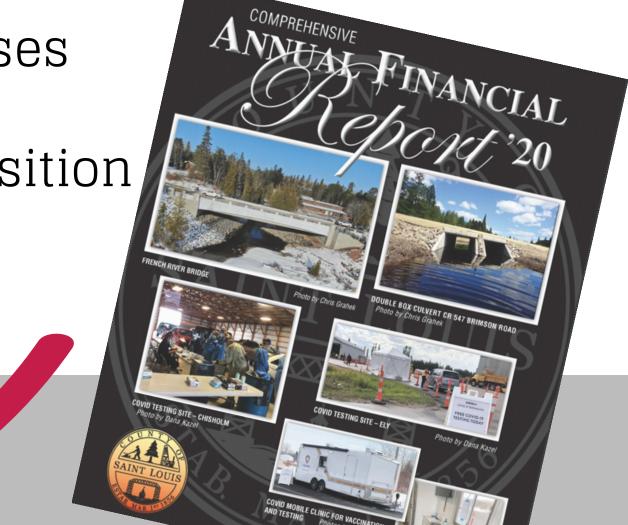
Page 6-7 Highlights.... Year in Review, Revenue & Expenses

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Page 10 Notables.....Looking Ahead

Access to the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) at:

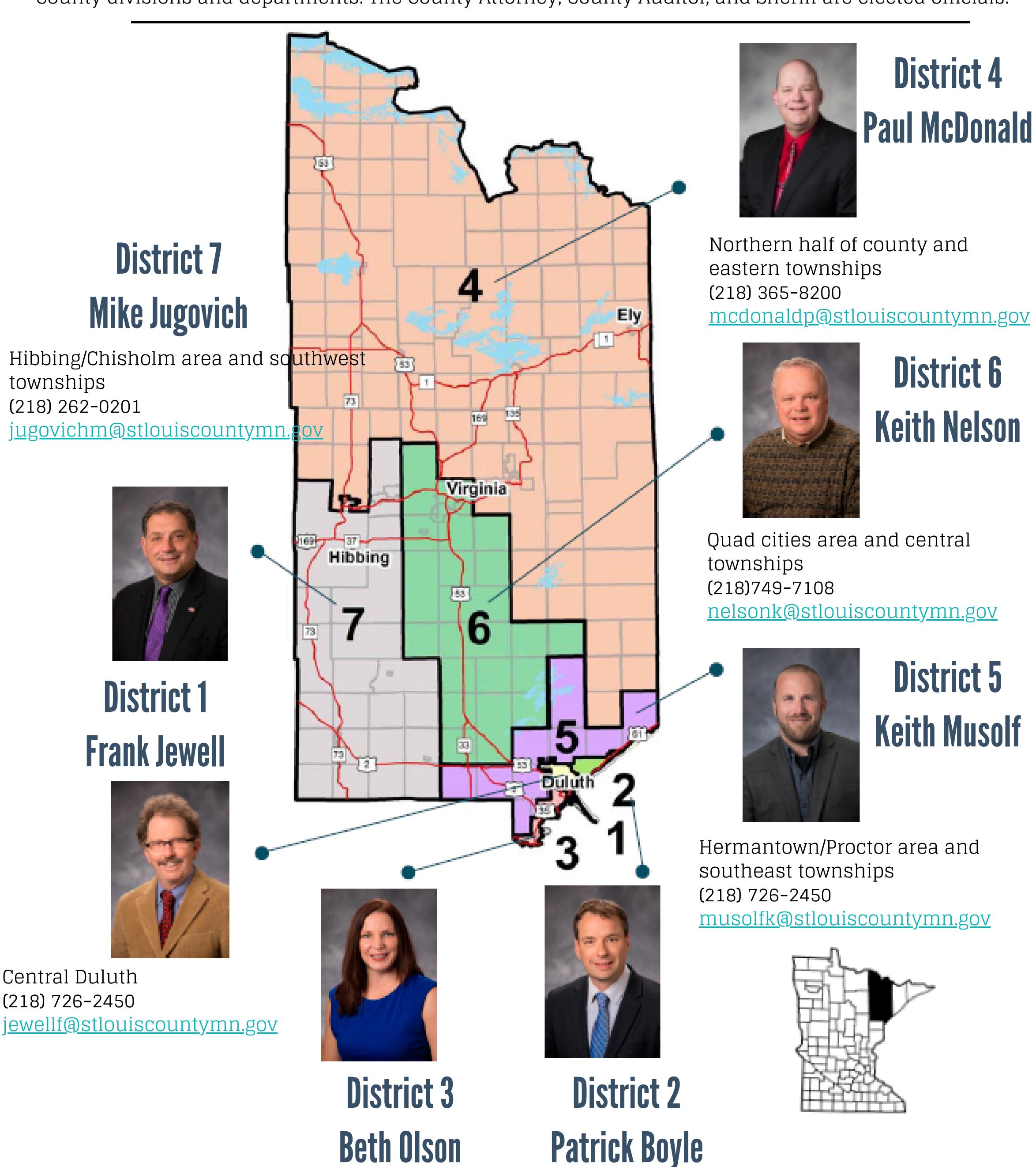
www.stlouiscountymn.gov/budget



# Commissioners

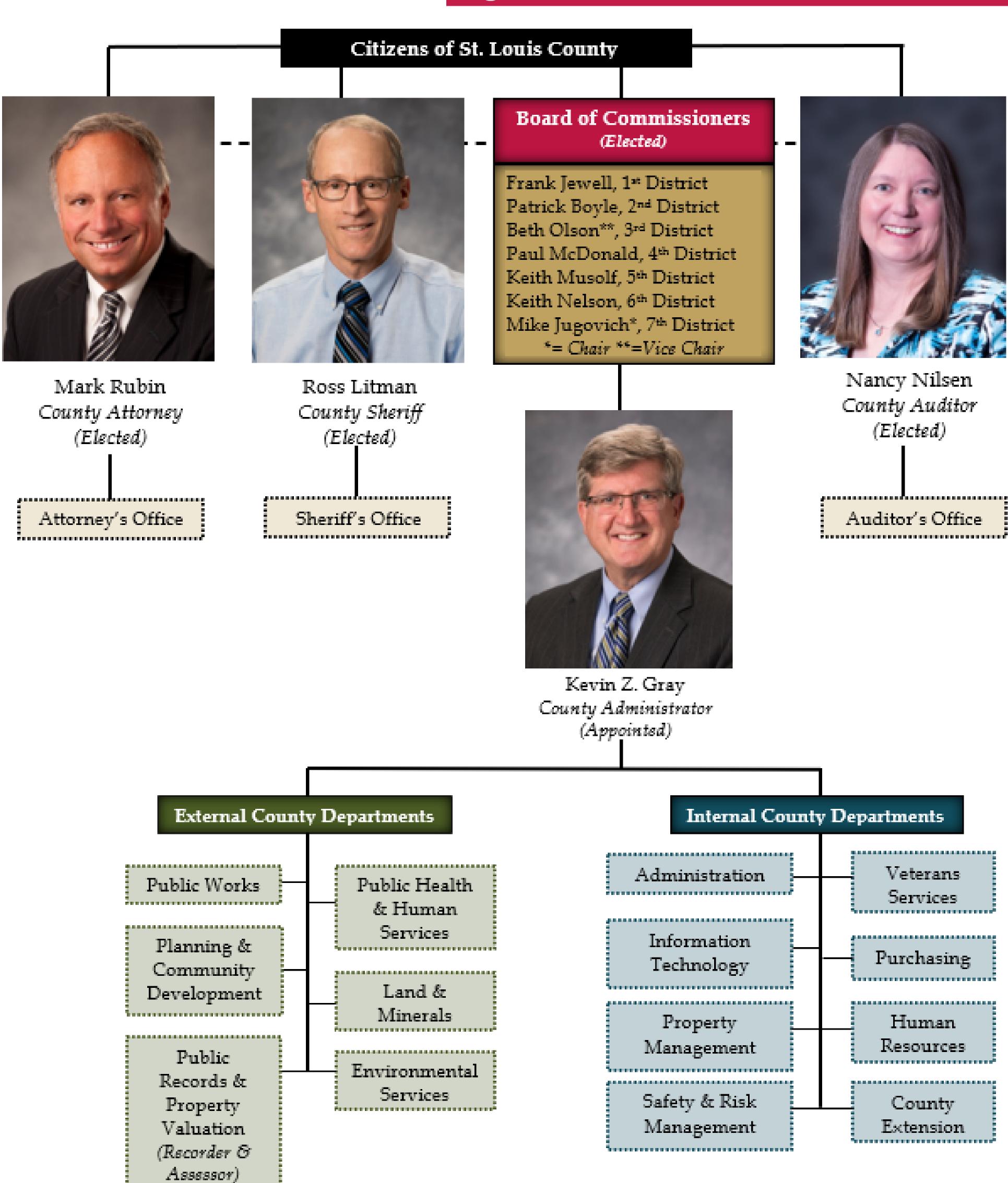
St. Louis County was established in 1856. Located in Northeastern Minnesota, St. Louis County is geographically the largest county east of the Mississippi River, covering 7,092 square miles, including water surface, from the Canadian border to Duluth. The County's 2020 census population was estimated at 198,455 residents, with an average of 28 people per square mile living in small mining towns, farm communities, and busy cities.

The St. Louis County Board of Commissioners consists of seven commissioners elected by the citizens of the County's seven districts. The Board appoints a County Administrator, who is the chief administrative officer of the County. The Administrator is responsible for administration of Board policy and for management of various County divisions and departments. The County Attorney, County Auditor, and Sheriff are elected officials.



QUESTIONS? stlouiscountymn.gov 218-726-2000 Western Duluth
(218) 726-2562
olsonb1@stlouiscountymn.gov
Term Ends: Jan. 2021

Eastern Duluth
(218) 726–2359
boylep@stlouiscountymn.gov



Full-Time Equivalent Employees 2011-2020

# Mining

The mining industry continues to be a driving force of the region's economy. The taconite industry supports roughly 10,000 jobs with an economic impact of \$4 billion annually. Preliminary totals indicate that taconite plants produced 30.2 million metric tons in 2020, a decrease of 22.8% from 2019. The demand for iron ore decreased due to COVID-19; however, all operations were producing at normal levels by the end of 2020.

PolyMet Mining Corp. is a publicly traded company focused on developing a coppernickel and precious metals mining operation on the Iron Range. The company is hoping to mine the Duluth Complex, a well-known geological formation near the eastern end of the historic Mesabi Iron Range, which contains the world's third-largest accumulation of nickel and the world's second-largest accumulation of copper and platinum group metals. If the project moves forward, it could bring 360 full-time jobs, along with 600 indirect jobs and 2 million hours of construction work, all of which could lead to a \$550 million economic impact to the region annually.

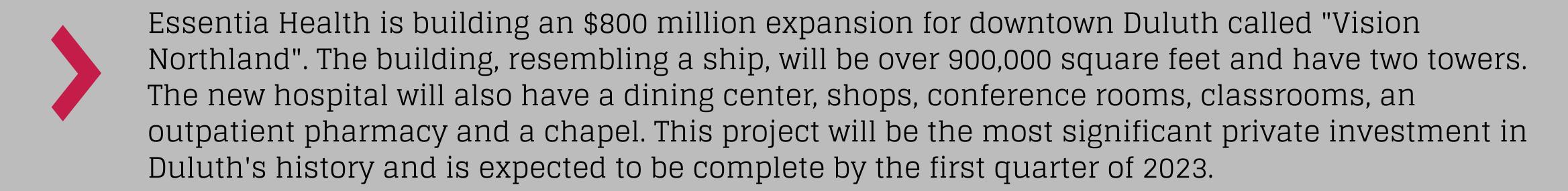
The Port of Duluth-Superior connects the heartland of the United States and Canada to the rest of the world, ranking among the top 20 ports in the U.S. in cargo tonnage. It is by far the largest cargo port on the Great Lakes, with the principal cargoes being iron ore (59%), coal (21%), grain (5%), and other (15%) in 2020. The Port of Duluth-Superior has averaged more than 35 million tons of cargo and nearly 900 vessel visits each year. The Duluth Seaway Port Authority also purchased the Duluth Lake Port dock for \$950,000 in December of 2020. The purchase





includes land, buildings, the slip and 3,000 feet of rail lines that connect the city's adjacent Clure Public Marine Terminal and the CN Duluth Intermodal Terminal. The goal is to revitalize the pier and bring it back to life in a way that contributes to our regional economy and further expands Duluth Cargo service to customers in our region and around the globe.

# Healthcare

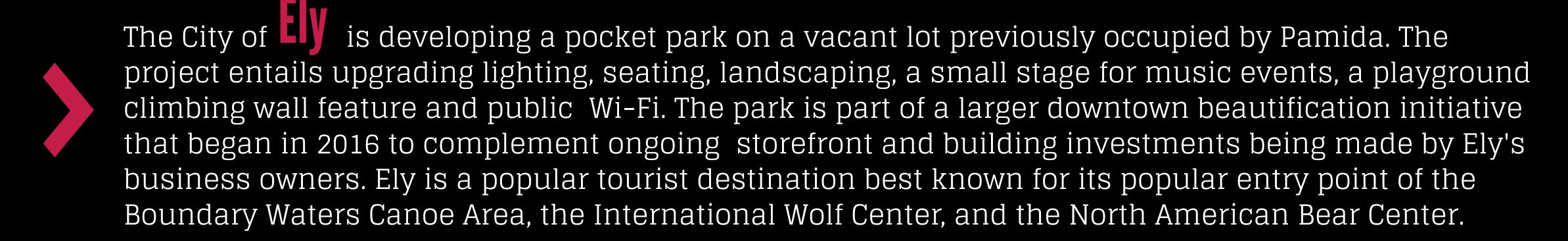


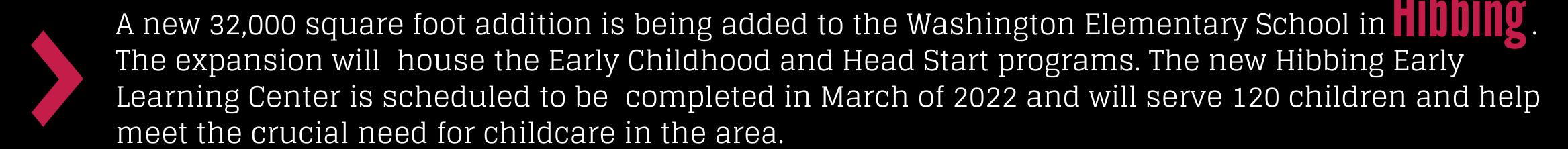
- Essentia Heath purchased the old Younkers and Sears spaces at the Miller Hill Mall and constructed their Fitness and Therapy Center in what was Younkers. In addition, they will be opening an outpatient surgery center in the formerSears space. Essentia also used Sears over the past year as a COVID testing site. The outpatient surgery center isanticipated to open in the spring of 2022 and will include a laboratory and a pharmacy.
- St. Luke's Hospital completed a \$37.5 million project in Duluth, which improves patient privacy, staff workflow and increases the space. The new 60,000 square-foot emergency department is triple the size of the old emergency department.

Economy

# Greater St. Louis County

# Additional Developments...





Delta Airlines is hiring 50 full time customer experience specialist positions in **Chisholm**. Delta Airlines will also be donating 2.8 acres of land to the City of Chisholm to create a multi-use clinic.

Canelake's Candies, an iconic candy store in downtown **Virginia**, is expanding into an adjacent building and doubling the size of its retail space. The candy store was originally founded in 1905 and is famous for their signature hot air, turtles, toffee, fudge, brittle, and caramels. They fulfill in-person and online orders that are shipped locally and throughout the nation.

The City of **block** campground expansion will bring increased tourism revenue to the area. The City of Gilbert made improvements to the utilities, beach area parking and water access at its 57-unit Sherwood Forest Campground adjacent to Lake Ore-Be-Gone. The 140-acre lake is an artificial lake formed decades ago by the flooding of three open-pit iron ore mines formerly owned by LTV Mining/Erie Mining Co. The lake has earned national notoriety among divers because of its crystal blue clear waters where they can see a sunken school bus, cars, US army plane, rail cars, boats, platforms, a jeep, a Huey helicopter, and old mining equipment.

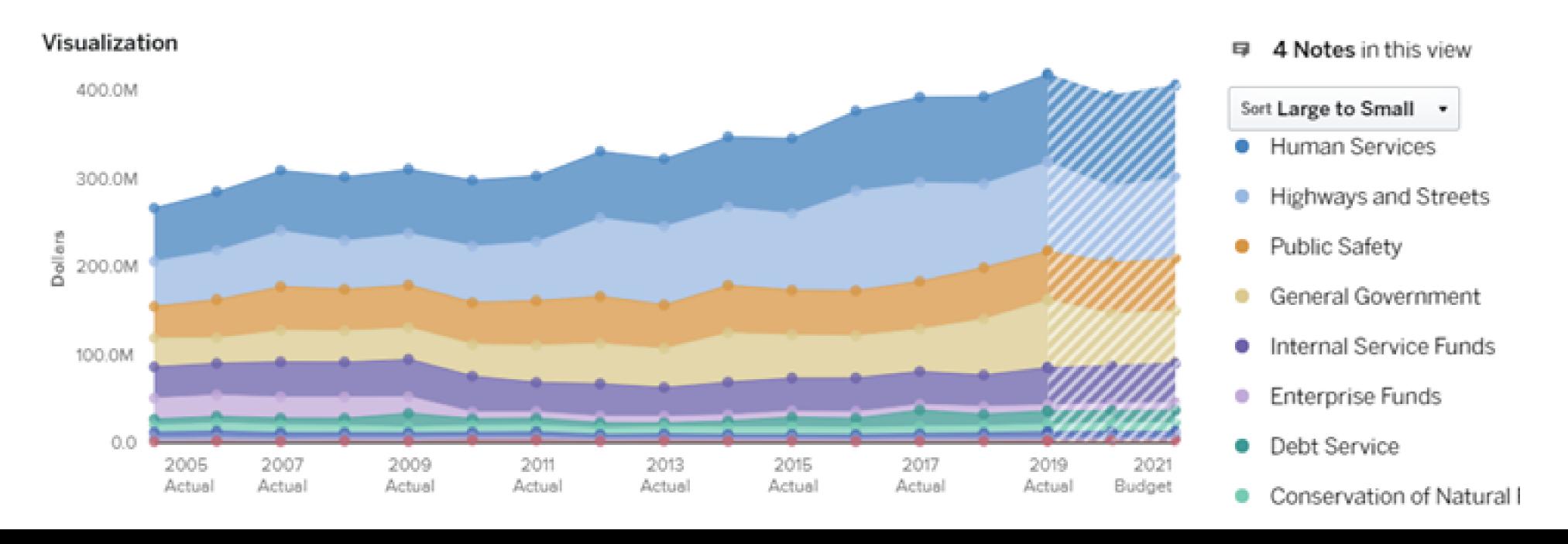
Lamppa Manufacturing in **Tower**, MN is continuing to grow faster than expected. The company produces woodburning sauna stoves and cord wood-burning warm air furnaces. Lamppa is one of two furnace makers in the nation to have the certification for new emission standards, which was implemented into federal law in 2020. Their furnace now also qualifies for a 26-percent federal stimulus credit for efficient wood furnace, which is anticipated to continue to increase demand.

# Housing...

- LSC Flats plans to construct student housing adjacent to Lake Superior College. The project will provide 87 apartments with 200 beds to LSC students. The projectis planned to start in 2022, with a completion date no later than the end of 2023.
- The City of Duluth garnered more than \$30 million in state aid to help build a 52-unit apartment building and help rehabilitate 93 units of distressed housing in 2020. The building will contain affordable housing for a range of incomes, with 26 of the units dedicated for youth who have been homeless, six for people with disabilities and 10 prioritized for members of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.
- The Lincoln Park neighborhood in Duluth is getting an influx of new housing following a microbrew business boom in that area. Enger Lofts, a \$6 million apartment project will remodel an old furniture store, and turn it into apartments and commercial space. Another 75-unit, four-story apartment building is going to be built where the former Roberts Furniture building stands. Also, the former Kemp's Dairy building was purchased with plans to build a \$15 million to \$25 million hotel or apartment building.

In addition to producing an ACFR and APFR, St. Louis County has OpenGov, which is the County's interactive online tool that gives anyone with internet access the ability to explore the current County budget and look at County investment trends over the last decade. This tool, known as "Budget Explorer," increases government transparency by allowing users to drill down into current year budget and compare it to previous years through interactive graphs.

# Go to www.stlouiscountymn.gov/budgetexplorer



Please note: Some of this information goes beyond the ACFR.

To provide additional context to St. Louis County's 2020 financials, it is critical to review St. Louis County Public Health's response during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each year, the County's Public Health & Human Services (PHHS) department develops a report called "THE LIVES WE TOUCHED."

To view report, go to https://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/departments-a-z/public-health-human-services.

# LOCAL COVID-19 FUNDING SUPPORT

ECONOMIC SERVICES & SUPPORTS WAS INVOLVED IN COORDINATING, PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR, AND DISTRIBUTING ALMOST

to support local organizations and further local COVID-19 response.

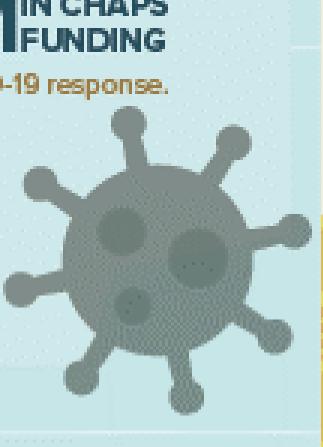
ST. LOUIS COUNTY HELPED TO COORDINATE OVER

SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS

without an alternative place to isolate or guarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic.

TO OUR

COMMUNITY



ST. LOUIS COUNTY AND RESPONDED TO OVER

calls on the COVID-19 hotline

ORGANIZATIONS

Throughout the pandemic, SchoolLiaisons have been guiding 29 public, private, and charter schools through the Minnesota Department of Healthguidance - consulting on protocols, assisting in testing and contact tracing, helping mitigate outbreaks, providingresources, and helping schedule vaccines.

# PUBLIC HEALTH

HERE IS SOME OF WHAT OUR PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE ACCOMPLISHED IN 2020 DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

**29,619 TOTAL HOURS** SPENT IN 2020 BY PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES STAFF ON COVID-19 RESPONSE.



# CLINICAL SERVICES

provided intensive infection control assessment and guidance to long-term care facilities. The team worked with healthcare systems across the county to develop a CONTROL rapid notification and response to suspect or COVID-19 positive cases in long-term care settings. The team assisted the Minnesota Department of Health in case management when outbreaks were identified.



# TESTING

Our local public health department developed a system for community testing, a system for public safety testing and responded to community outbreaks.

THERE WERE

administered in SLC in 2020

being administered by our nurses.

WE BEGAN ROLLING OUT THE COVID-19 VACCINES IN THE COUNTY IN DECEMBER 2020.

first doses before year end.



WORKED TO DEVELOP CAMPAIGNS AROUND PROPER STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

OFFERED SCIENCE-BASED RESOURCES FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING VACCINE HESITANCY



needed temporary shelter for isolation and quarantine.

108 REQUESTS

for essential items (food, clothing, medication, etc.) for COVID-19 positive individuals in isolation.



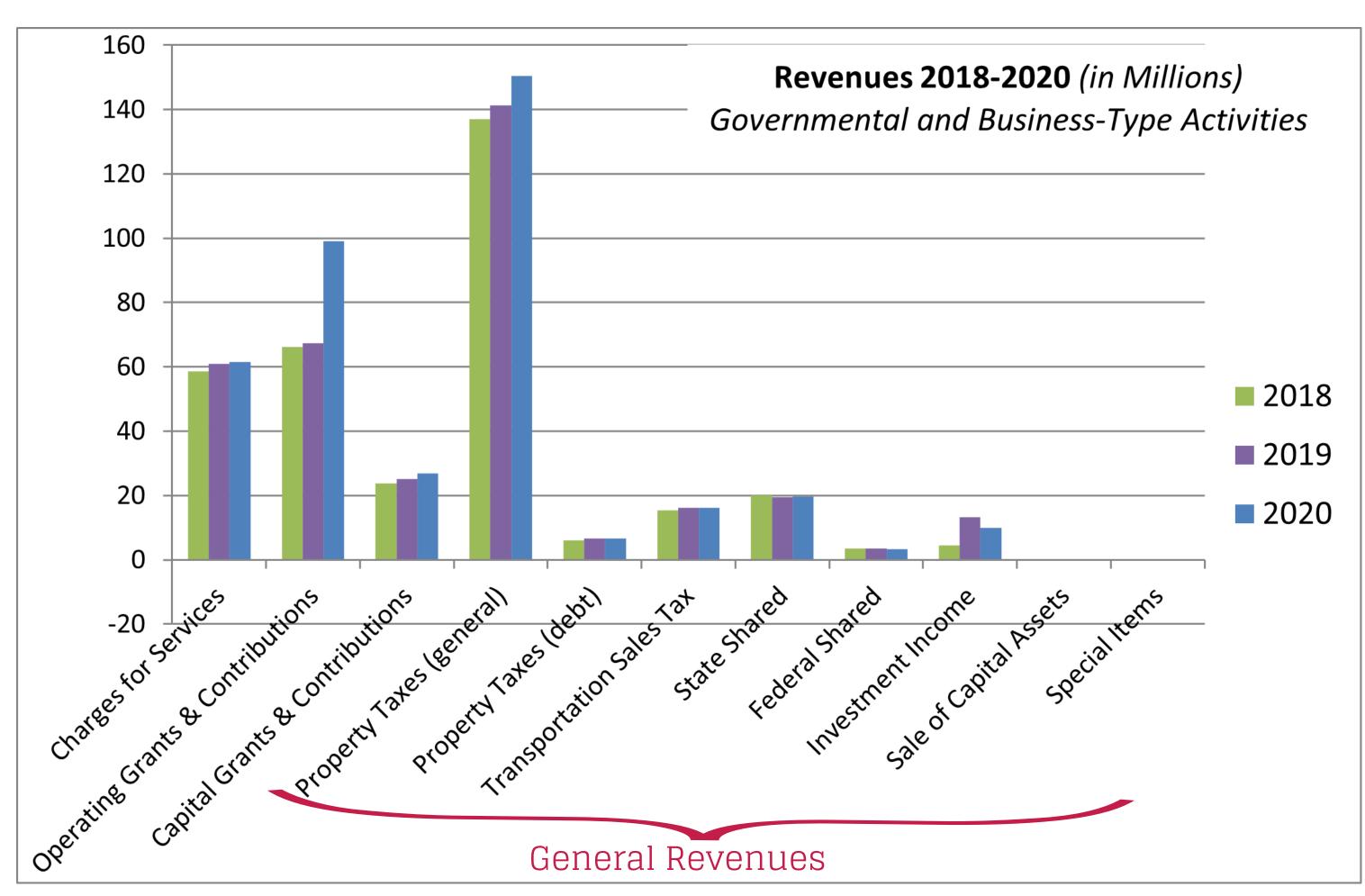
234

to our isolation and quarantine sites.



# ESSENTIAL SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, every division of PHHS was committed to finding creative ways to continue their core work.



In 2020, Program Revenue (revenue derived directly by a program from sources other than County taxpayers) for governmental activities increased by \$33.2M to \$179.6M, while program revenue for business-type activities increased to \$8M. Operating grants & contributions increased by \$31.9M due to CARES funding of \$24.8M.

General Revenues increased by \$6.2M to \$206.0M.

Tax Revenues increased by \$9.3M mainly due to the increase in the 2020 Property Tax Levy.

Transportation Sales Tax Revenue was flat in 2020 from 2019, while state shared revenues (commonly referred to as local government aids) increased by \$0.2M to \$19.7M due to the County receiving \$1.4M more in County Program Aid, but \$.5M less in PERA Aid and \$.7M less in mineral royalties.

**INVESTMENT INCOME** for governmental activities was \$9.6 million for 2020 (a decrease of \$3.1 million compared to 2019) mainly due to the drop in interest rates. The County also made fewer investments in the first half of 2020 due to the County Board delaying property tax due dates in response to the pandemic.

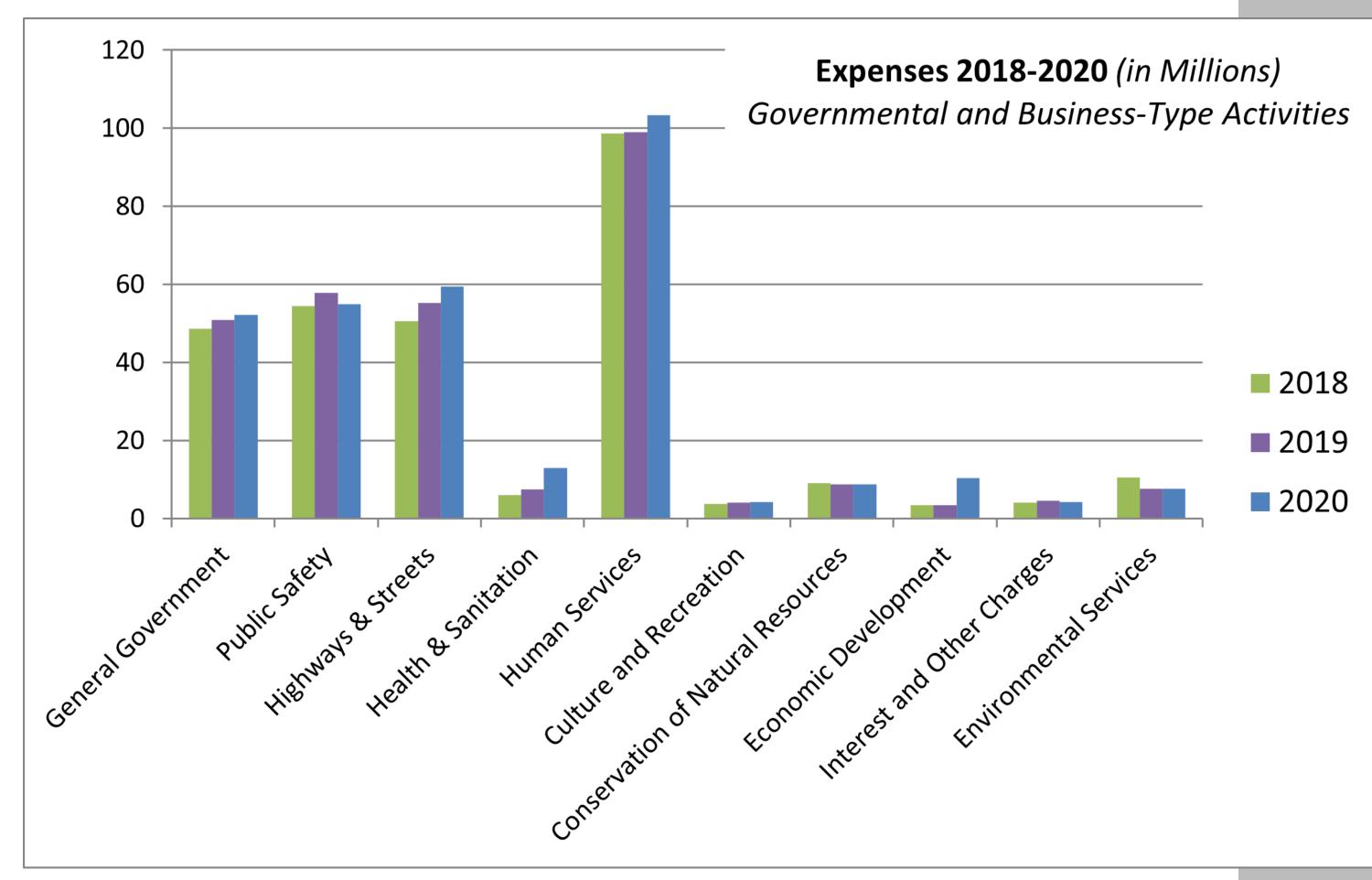
Expenses for governmental activities increased \$19.4M in 2020 (or 6.3%) mainly due to the CARES funds the County received to help with the pandemic response.

# **Economic Development** increased by \$6.9M due to the CARES funds that

were given out to businesses.

# Health & Human Services

increased \$9.9M due to the increased costs related to the pandemic response.



Expenses for business-type activities were \$7.7 million in 2020. In 2020, almost all expenses for business-type activities occurred in the **Environmental Services** Fund. Depreciation and Depletion expense decreased by \$0.1 million. There was no landfill cell closure or construction for 2020. Depletion calculations decreased due to reduced Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) inflation factors for post-closure current values. Operating expenses increased due to contract services, garbage collection, and intra-county charges for operating the landfill. Material expenses showed decreases in fuels, tires and tire repair for vehicles and transfer trailers. Personnel Services increased in salaries, fringe, and retired health insurance. A transfer out of salaries to On-Site Waste Water and special revenue grants reduced the salary increase in 2020. GASB 68 pension expense also decreased.

1: What is CARES?

CARES = Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Federal funding distributed to state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments that helped offset the impact of COVID-19.

# Fund Balances

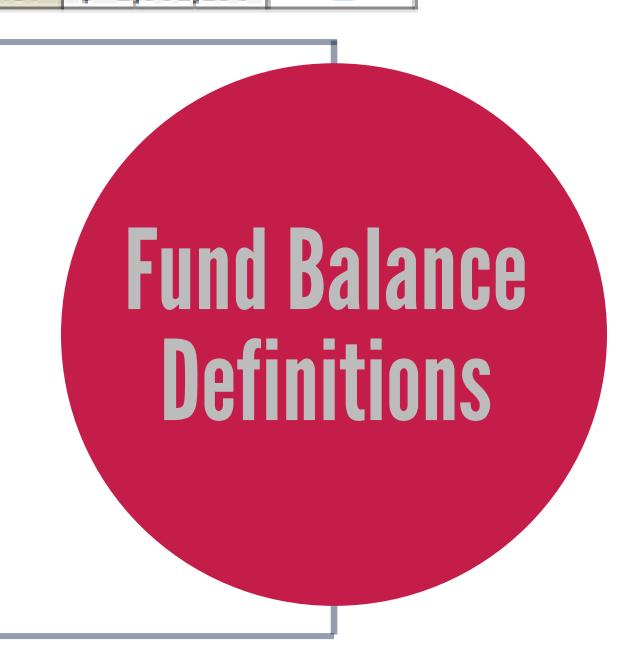
The County's governmental funds reported a combined ending fund balance of \$249.3 million for 2020, an increase of \$44.4 million compared to 2019. The restricted fund balance was \$101.2 million--or about 40.6% of the fund balance, while the unrestricted portion was \$148.1 million --or about 59.4%. Unrestricted fund balance was \$33.6M committed, \$71.4M assigned, and \$43.1M unassigned.

Year-end (Dec. 31) Fund Balances											
	2016	2017	2018 2019		2020	Variance (2020 vs. 2019)					
General	\$70,505,326	\$69,508,842	\$71,965,013	\$73,252,393	\$80,917,502	\$ 8,952,489	•				
Capital Projects	\$45,088,838	\$16,006,778	\$46,348,164	\$21,943,135	\$43,520,130	\$ (2,828,034)	1				
Road & Bridge	\$32,385,648	\$34,473,727	\$31,133,262	\$27,622,745	\$26,698,103	\$ (4,435,159)	1				
Public Health & Human Services	\$23,660,263	\$23,727,275	\$24,412,618	\$28,396,961	\$30,903,689	\$ 6,491,071	1				
Forfeited Tax Sale	\$ 1,562,318	\$ 1,672,441	\$ 1,607,739	\$ 1,607,739	\$ 1,211,793	\$ (395,946)	1				
Shoreline Sales	\$17,901,529	\$20,103,607	\$19,672,907	\$23,549,683	\$26,372,586	\$ 6,699,679	1				
Other Governmental Funds	\$26,963,938	\$29,913,861	\$30,117,830	\$28,497,494	\$66,058,011	\$35,940,181	<b>1</b>				
Debt Service Fund	\$25,434,249	\$20,458,433	\$19,902,267	\$17,928,541	\$22,203,457	\$ 2,301,190	1				

**Committed Funds**c= funds approved by the County Board

= amounts that are to be used for specific purposes

= amounts that do not have a specific use identified, but generally support cash flows of the County



The Office of the State Auditor recommends that counties maintain unrestricted fund balance in the General Fund of approximately 25 to 50 percent of operating revenues, or no less than five months of operating expenditures (41.7%). The County's unassigned fund balance represented 35.2% of General Fund operating revenues and 41.8% of operating expenditures.

Increased by \$7.6M to \$80.9M due to higher than anticipated revenues, employee travel savings, personnel budget savings (due to position vacancies and COVID-19 reimbursements), and funds that were unspent, but encumbered at year-end.

**Capital Projects:** Increased from \$21.9M in 2019 to \$43.5M in 2020 due to the County issuing \$25.9M in new debt in 2020 to further invest in road and bridge improvements.

Had a \$3.1M excess of revenue over expenditure in 2020 mainly due to the receipt of Road & Bridge: revenue for the June 2012 Flood from the State (\$777k), Gas & Diesel savings (\$610k), a transfer from the General Fund of \$250k for Dight of Way Classics and Land D. transfer from the General Fund of \$350k for Right-of-Way Clearing and Local Road and Bridge Construction expenditures coming in below budget. Some of these savings were offset by higher than budget Inventory spending.

Public Health & Human Services: Had excess revenue of \$2.1M in 2020 mainly due to lower Public Aid and travel expenditures than planned.

Accounts for the proceeds from the sale or lease of land forfeited to the State of Minnesota and distributed \$2M in net proceeds to county funds, cities, towns and Forfeited Tax Sale: Minnesota and distributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns and stributed \$2M III Het proceeds to county funds, crites, towns \$2M higher than in 2019 due to a restatement in 2019. In other words, the County began to record timber revenue as of the <u>scaled</u> date instead of the contract date. Scale = measure volume or mass of harvested wood

Note: Shoreline Sales Fund is used to report resources that are legally restricted to the extent that only up to 5 1/2 percent of the market value of the fund on Jan. 1 of the preceding calendar year may be used to support the County's programs. The Debt Service Fund 's fund balance decreased \$2.0M in 2019 mainly due to using debt service reserves to make part of the 2019 payments on the 2018A and 2018B bond issues.

# Cash Flow

The County Board authorized the County Auditor to establish portions of fund balances for encumbrances ("I owe you's"), cash flow, future year budgets (savings account) and future unallotments (back-up money in case the state government shortchanges the County).

	Encumbrances	Future Year Budget	Future Unallotment	Cash Flow	TOTAL		Cash Flow Max	% Funded	
General		\$ 2,360,137	\$ 4,888,997	\$ 35,865,498	\$ 43,114,632		\$ 37,609,011	95.36%	
Road & Bridge	\$ 2,070,448	\$ 260,000			\$ 2,330,448		\$ 9,885,618	0.00%	
PHHS	\$ 241,976	\$ 364,745		\$ 17,633,617	\$ 18,240,338		\$ 21,758,528	81.04%	
Total	\$ 2,312,424	\$ 2,984,882	\$ 4,888,997	\$ 53,499,115	\$ 63,685,418				

# **Net Position**

Net position (the different between assets and liabilities) may, over time, be a useful indicator of a government's financial condition. In the case of St. Louis County, assets and deferred outflows exceeded liabilities and deferred inflows for all activities by \$953.5M.

	Net Position (in millions)	2016			2017	2018		2019		2020		Variance (2020 vs. 2019)	
	Total Assets		1,004.6	\$:	1,049.0	\$:	1,135.0	\$1	1,180.0	\$1	,268.3	\$	88.3
豆	Deferred Ouflows	\$	72.0	\$	40.5	\$	26.3	\$	15.9	\$	18.2	\$	2.3
en e	Total Liabilities	\$	343.3	\$	290.8	\$	317.0	\$	302.3	\$	338.2	\$	35.9
E #	Total Deferred Inflows	\$	17.5	\$	38.5	\$	40.8	\$	35.0	\$	14.5	\$	(20.5)
je 2	Total Liabilities  Total Deferred Inflows  Total Net Position, As Reported  Change in Accta, Principle		715.8	\$	760.2	\$	803.5	\$	858.6	\$	933.8	\$	75.2
ြိ	Change in Acctg. Principle			\$	(5.0)	\$	(0.8)					\$	-
	Total Net Position, As Restated	\$	715.8	\$	755.2	\$	802.7	\$	858.6	\$	933.8	\$	75.2
	Total Assets	\$	24.3	\$	27.1	\$	24.6	\$	23.6	\$	24.1	\$	0.5
-Type les	Deferred Ouflows	\$	1.1	\$	0.5	\$	0.3	\$	0.1	\$	0.3	\$	0.2
	Total Liabilities	\$	6.1	\$	4.6	\$	4.8	\$	4.3	\$	4.4	\$	0.1
ess	Total Deferred Inflows	\$	0.2	\$	0.3	\$	0.5	\$	0.4	\$	0.2	\$	(0.2)
Business-T Activitie	Total Net Position, As Reported	\$	19.1	\$	22.7	\$	19.6	\$	19.0	\$	19.7	\$	0.7
	Change in Acctg. Principle			\$	(0.2)							\$	-
	Total Net Position, As Restated	\$	19.1	\$	22.5	\$	19.6	\$	19.0	\$	19.7	\$	0.7
	Total Net Position, As Restated	\$	734.9	\$	777.7	\$	822.2	\$	877.6	\$	953.5	\$	75.9

# What are Deferred Inflows & Outflows?

Deferred Inflows & Outflows represent flows of resources into and out of the County during the fiscal year; unlike revenues and expenses, which relate to the period in which they occur, deferrals are related to future periods.

# **Governmental Activities:**

HINT:

Assets = things the County owns Liabilities = things the County owes

In 2020, the total net position of governmental activities increased by \$75.2M to \$933.8M. Current and other assets increased by \$50.4M in 2020 to \$329.3M. The main reason for the significant increase was the \$25.9M 2020A bond issuance that only had \$100k of spending at the end of 2020. The 2020B refinancing bond issue added \$5.2M to cash, and the County received \$3.9M in State Relief Aid at the end of 2020 that was given out to businesses and non-profits in 2021. Capital assets at year-end 2020 were \$939.0M, compared with \$901.1M in 2019, an increase of \$37.9M. Significant capital outlays for infrastructure, such as roads, by the County each year are the driving force behind large annual increases in capital assets. Long-term liabilities outstanding increased by \$36.6M in 2020 to \$309.4M. The main reason for the increase is due to the County issuing \$25.9M in new debt and refinancing \$5.2M of existing debt. The pension liability increased \$10.4M in 2020 for St. Louis County's portion of PERA's unfunded liability.

# **Business-Type Activities:**

Business-Type Activities consisted of two funds--Environmental Services & Plat Books

Capital assets decreased by \$300k in 2020, to \$7.9M. The depreciation expense in 2020 was \$500k. A feasibility study for a landfill in Canyon was started in 2020. A vehicle and four new transfer station trailers were purchased and two transfer station trailers and two vehicles were sold. Total liabilities for business-type activities increased by \$100k in 2020. The majority of change was due to the GASB 75 OPEB Health liability, which increased \$100k in 2020.

Annual Comprehensive Financial Report at: www.stlouiscountymn.gov/budget

The graphic to the right illustrates the relative cost of providing County services by category, as funded through each taxpayer's 2021 property tax dollars.

> Adopted 2021 \$147,721,853.62

Adopted 2021 Budget:

1.48% Levy Increase

# Where Taxpayer Dollars Will Go...



Administration, Auditor, HR, Planning & Community Development, Recorder, Veterans Office, Purchasing, Assessor, IT



Public Health, Child Support Collection, Child Protective Services, Services to Adults, the Elderly, Families with Children, Mentally Ill, Developmentally Disabled, and the Chemically Dependent



Engineering, Road Maintenance, Equipment & Materials, Road Construction, Road Overlay, Bridge Projects, Right of Way



Arrowhead Regional Corrections, Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, County Jail, 911 Operations, Emergency Management, Law Enforcement Patrol, Public Safety, Boat & Water Safety, Court Security, Civil Process Service, Background Checks, Medical Examiner

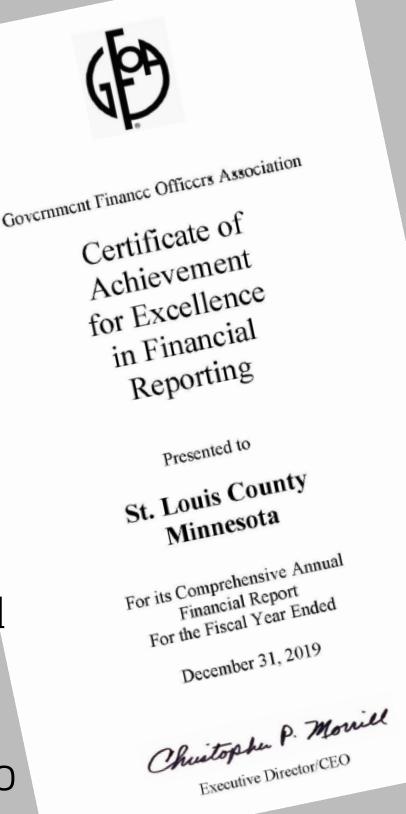
Debt 5%

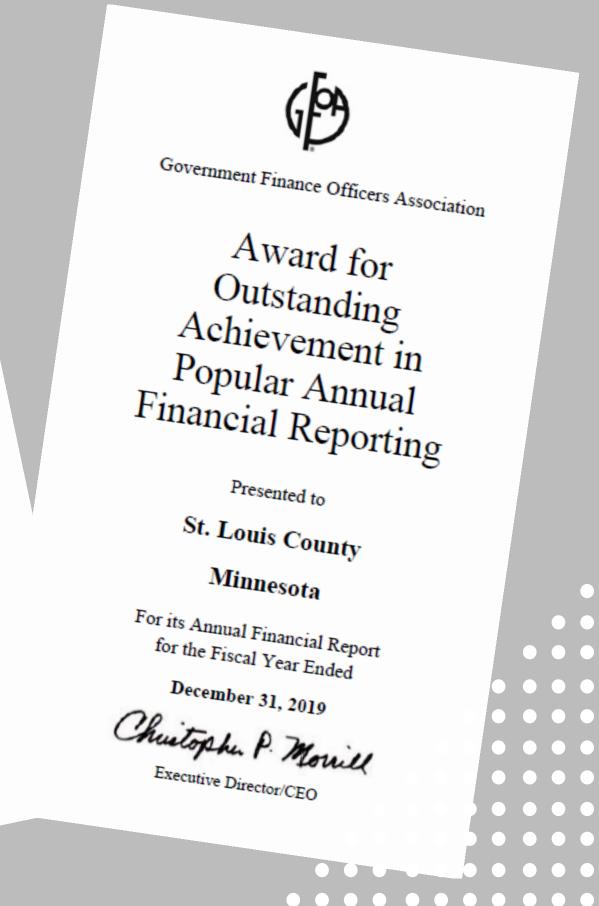
Payoff of bonds for capital projects

# DID YOU KNOW?

# Financial Achievement

States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement Government Finance Officers Association for Excellence in Financial Department of Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting to St. Louis County for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2019. In order to be awarded, a governmental unit must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive financial report, the contents of which conform to program standards. The report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements. A Certificate of Achievement is valid for a period of one year. St. Louis County has received the Certificate for the last 31 consecutive years. The County has also received the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Annual Popular Reporting for the last five consecutive years.

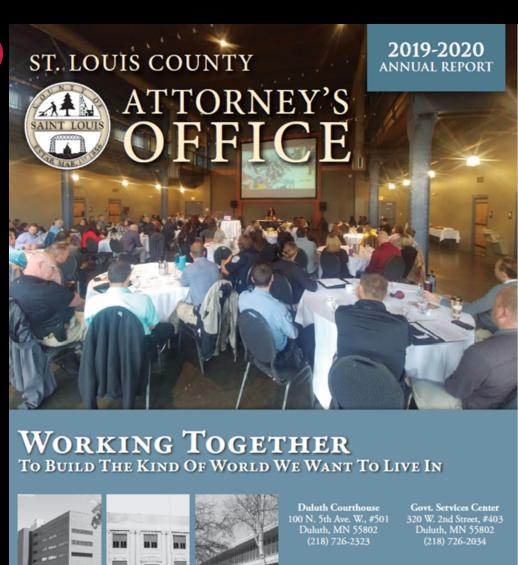




The Attorney's Office Annual Reports are available at https://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/departments-a-z/attorney/annual-reports



The St. Louis County Depot and County Extension are building synergies, including a monthly newsletter. For more information, go to www.experiencethedepot.org.



# Contact Us!

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budget@stlouiscountymn.gov

Call:

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